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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Friday, April 16, 1937

(~~FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY~~)

Subject: "TRY A DISH OF KIDNEYS!" Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Did you ever notice how an Englishman's eyes brighten when anybody mentions kidney pie or kidney stew? A dish of kidneys properly prepared is to the average Englishman what a slice of pie is to the average American.

And if as fine and intelligent a people as the British think of kidney as a delicacy, surely it's a food worthy of our consideration.

Let's consider first its food value. Our nutrition specialists say that it is first of all a rich source of iron, the mineral so necessary to good rich blood. It's also an excellent source of vitamin G, and good for vitamins B and C.

So the nutrition specialists heartily approve our eating kidney.

But how about the family budget? Can we afford this kidney which the British consider such a delicacy? Not long ago just for curiosity I telephoned to three different butchers' shops to see how much kidney cost. That day they were asking 15 to 20 cents apiece for beef kidneys, 15 cents for veal kidneys, and 5 cents each for lamb kidneys.

The status of kidney today is about the same as that of liver 25 years ago. You remember the good old days when the village butcher just threw the liver in with some meat purchase. Then people discovered how delicious liver was and up went the price. At least the price of veal liver.

One of these days Americans are going to feel the same about kidney dishes. So now is your golden opportunity to enjoy this food while it is still reasonable in price.

Well, since the British say kidney is delicious, and the butcher says it's cheap, and the home economist says it's rich in iron and vitamins, let's serve it.

But if we're going to serve kidney we'll first have to find out how to shop for it and how to cook it.

In buying kidney we'll get no help from labels or markings. Carcasses and cuts of meat may be graded and stamped with such words as Prime, Choice, Good, and Cutter. But not the organs. When we buy heart or liver, brains or kidneys, or sweetbreads, we have nothing but our nose and our eyes to help us. Unless our butcher is an honest and helpful soul, of course.

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Look kidneys over carefully to see that they are FULL AND PLUMP, of a BRIGHT rather than a dull color. See that they are free from blemishes. And you'll not want to pay for the suet, which you can't use, so you'll want the kidneys to be free from suet also.

Pork kidneys are smooth and of a good reddish-brown shade. Veal kidneys are lighter in color and instead of being smooth have a lot of surface foldings, or convolutions. Beef kidneys have still more foldings. It wouldn't be a bad idea to smell your prospective purchase to see that the odor is good.

Having bought your beef or veal kidney you may want some suggestions about cooking it.

Naturally the first thing to do is to wash that kidney and remove its outer membrane. Then if it's lamb or veal kidney you've bought, the rest is very simple. You just broil or saute it. There are some people who insist on parboiling every sort of kidney, no matter how young an animal it is from. But really it's too bad to take all the good flavor away from such meats by this parboiling. Parboiling destroys some of the vitamins, too. So why do it unless it is necessary?

Now if you've bought a beef kidney, that's a different matter. Beef kidney does take some extra handling. For it you'll want to cut out the heavy veins, then cover the kidney with cold water and heat slowly to the boiling point and then throw away the water. Use and throw away as many waters for your parboiling as is necessary to take away the strong odor. When there is no longer any scum left on the water, you have probably parboiled the kidney enough.

Then simmer it in fresh water until the meat is tender. At no stage in the cooking of kidney do you want high temperatures. Use only moderate heat. When the kidney is tender take it out of its cooking water and cut it up for whatever use you prefer. It's delicious in a stew with potatoes and onions, thickened, and flavored with tabasco sauce and a little lemon juice. And it makes excellent meat pie. You might like it best cooked creole style with sweet pepper, onion, and tomatoes and served on toast or noodles.

If you've never eaten kidney or if you've eaten only kidney that has been improperly cooked, you don't know what you've missed. Sometime soon when you're in an experimental mood you might try preparing a kidney dish. I'm willing to bet that your first time won't be your last!

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